1; Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

because her funeral was being held at the *kertnòdr* of her father and not at that of her husband. 766

At every funeral place there should be a second circle of stones forming a *tu*, or buffalo-pen. These pens are now rarely, if ever, used, and are a relic of the time when the ceremonies of the *marvainolkedr* were prolonged over two days, the buffaloes being caught and penned on the first day, and killed on the second. A third ring of stones is the *azaram*, at the opening of which the ashes are buried at the final scene of the funeral rites. 764

There are specially appointed days for the funeral ceremonies. These days differ to some extent for different clans and for the two sexes. Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday are the most general days for the funerals of males, only two clans having Saturday as a funeral day for men. For females Thursday and Saturday are most frequently chosen, two clans only holding the funerals of women on Tuesdays. In no case could I find that funerals are performed on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. These days are, on the other hand, the most usual days set apart as *madnol* or *palinol*,[1] and villages which have their *madnol* or *palinol* on Sunday or Tuesday do not appear to have their funerals on these days. The general rule is that a funeral must not take place on a *madnol* or *palinol*. In several cases I was told that if the *mani*, or sacred bell, were used, the funeral must be on one day of the week; thus for the Karsol, it must take place on Sunday; for the Kwòdrdoni people, on Tuesday. These obligatory days of the funeral ceremonies often involve the necessity of keeping the corpse for several days.

I did not make special inquiries into ceremonies of the deathbed, but Marshall states (p. 171) that a man who is not expected to recover is dressed in the ornaments and jewellery of his house, which he will wear till he dies or recovers; and Marshall mentions an instance of a man who had revived from what was thought to be his deathbed who paraded about, wearing the finery with which he had 763

[1] The *madnol* and the *palinol* are sacred days on which certain activities are prohibited (see Chap. XVII).

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

763 been bedecked. In this case, it was said that he would be permitted to carry the ornaments till his death. Marshall also states that the relatives give the dying man milk to drink when on the point of death.

764 437 After death the body should be wrapped in a dark cloth called *ān*, which is of the same material as the *tuni* worn by the *paloi* and other dairymen, and, like the *tuni*, is procured from the Badagas of Jakaneri. It is doubtful, however, whether this custom of enwrapping the body in the *ān* is now kept up with any regularity. Outside the *ān* should be an ornamented mantle (*pukuruputkuli*) and then a mantle of the ordinary kind.

764 The body of a woman is kept in the hut in which she has died till the day of the funeral, and, with special exceptions, this is also done with the bodies of men.

When a man dies at the village of Nòdrs, his body is taken into the three roomed *tarvali* and placed on the right-hand bed (*meitün*) of the outermost room. While the body is lying here, the building is still used as a dairy, but women are allowed to enter the outermost room except when the *palikartmekh* is actually engaged in the business of the dairy. [234] It is only when it is being used as a funeral hut that women [562] are ever allowed to enter a dairy, and then they may only sit on the left-hand bed—the *kitün*.

On the day appointed for the *etvainolkedr*, the body is carried to the funeral place. In some cases certain ceremonies are performed at the village at which the death has taken place; thus, at Kars, the body of a man is first laid in front of the *kudrpali* and then on one of the two eminences called *imudrikars* (see Fig. 21), which stand near the dairy, and from this it is taken to the other *imudrikars*, and after lying here for a while it is borne to the special funeral village of Taradrkirsi. At Kuzhu, another village of the Karsol, the body is taken from the hut and laid by the side of the stone called *menkars*; then it is taken to a stone called *imudrikars* in front of the *kudrpali*, and laid with the head at the stone and the feet towards the dairy. A buffalo of the ordinary kind (*putiir*) is then milked; the milk is put into a vessel and from this poured into a leaf cup of *kakud* leaves, and

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

775 and they run no danger from this source, however bad they may have been.

The people of Taradr are said to have a separate Amnòdr near Külvari or Perithi, and they do not travel by Nidzmûtkârs or by Panîpikârs, nor do they cross Püvûrkin. They have no dangers by the way, and however wicked they may have been they go to their Amnòdr in security. Men, women and buffaloes all follow the same path.

Origin of Funeral Customs

773 The various funeral customs are said to have been partly
763 ordained by Teikirzi. The following story is given as the account of their origin :—

At first no Toda died. After a time a Piedr man died at the village of Erparskòdr. He died in his hut and the Todas took his body to the funeral place, but on the way they laid it by a heap of stones between Erparskòdr and Umgas. The stones are still to be seen, and are called Möditikars.[1] While the body lay by these stones, some of the people were weeping bitterly; others were dancing and singing, and others were going to drive buffaloes. Teikirzi, who saw the people weeping, took pity and came to bring the dead man back to life. When she came to the place she found that though some of the people were crying, others seemed quite happy. She liked what she saw, and decided not to raise the dead man, so she went away and ordained that in the future some should cry at funerals and others should be happy, and her laws as to the conduct of the funeral ceremonies have been followed ever since.

Then the people took up the dead body and went on to Kûrûvòrs, near Umgas, where they performed the funeral ceremonies.

764 In the various complicated ceremonies described in this chapter there are certain features which may be briefly discussed.

192 [1] *Möditi* is the name applied to all the women of other tribes. It is perhaps suggestive that this name should be used for a stone connected with the goddess Teikirzi.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. XX.

In my desire to witness a Toda's deathbed, as well as all the ceremonies consequent thereon, I had promised a handsome present to anyone who would bring me timely information, whether by night or by day, of an approaching event; when I noticed a lad move off quietly with bright hope on his countenance, and shortly afterwards I overtook him striding over hill and dale, straight as a bird to his quarry. The reply to my enquiry where he was going was translated by the Tamil interpreter, 'Going to see somebody *too much* sick.' He was in fact on his road to some invalid Toda, whose case he thought bad.

When a man is so ill as to lead to the expectation of his early demise, he is dressed up in the ornaments and jewellery of his house, in order that he may make a respectable corpse. These he will wear until he either dies or recovers. Indeed a man who had revived from what was thought his death-bed has been observed parading about very proud and distinguished looking; wearing the finery with which he had been bedecked for his own funeral, and which he would be permitted to carry till he really departed this life.

When on the point of death, the last office his kin perform for their relative, is to give him milk, if only a drop or two, to drink. No prayer is said, nor are the Gods invoked in any way.

It is well here to observe, as reflecting on other social prejudices, that there is no religious necessity for *a son* to perform any one of the ceremonies attending on a Toda's death and funeral. The laws of Manou style the eldest son 'him who is begotten to perform the duty,' and in consequence of this absolute necessity for a son, we find amongst the Aryas a high importance set upon male progeny. The Todas, however, whilst equally craving for sons, yet do not require them for any such religious object. The pride in male children appears to be based upon less definable causes, so much so as to seem almost inherent in man.

The decorated corpse is now wrapped in a new mantle, into

3; Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

Each clan has its own appropriate* days of the week for the green funeral, "according to the *Shastras*."

The body is not removed from the place of death till it is carried to the burning place,† which the Todas call *Methgúdi* (*lit. Marriage temple*).

All green funerals are alike. I will describe one I saw near Kartèri, at the old burning ground of the neighbouring mands, an open space near a stream. The body was brought on a stretcher preceded by Kota musicians. It is not necessarily carried by the relatives, or even by men of the same clan. A rough hut (called *Nólpali* for a man, and *Nirzhèrzh* for a woman,) was built of boughs and grass, in which the body was placed. The women of the mand sat by it, and moaned in their peculiar manner, one of them meanwhile embroidering a strip of cloth for a purse. Four walking-sticks and several skeins of cotton-thread, each with a bunch of cowries at the end, were laid upon the body, which was wrapped in a new *pútkuli*,‡ the feet being tied together by the great toes with a piece of blue thread.

A rude circle§ about a yard in diameter was then made of single stones, leaving an entrance gap at one side. Outside this circle the body was laid, with the head opposite the entrance, and the nearest male relatives in turn, drawing their *pútkulis* over their heads,‖ took a wand (*Pett*), round which was tied a small rag, obtained from the *Pálól*, dug up the earth at the entrance of the circle, and muttering "*Purzhutukamè*," "May I throw earth?" threw three handfuls into the centre of the circle, and three on the body. After this the body was carried back to the hut and placed on the ground outside, and the women sat round it as before. A large silver necklace (*Kévilth*, *Plate* XI., *Fig. b*), belonging to the widow, was laid on the breast of the corpse.

The funeral pile¶ was made of large logs on a space cleared for the purpose near the hut. The dead man's herd was driven up, and some fifteen or twenty Todas went to it, one of them carrying wreaths of leaves to throw at the doomed buffaloes. Two of the animals were seized by four or five men hanging to their necks, separated from the herd, and dragged to the hut, followed by the Kota musicians. A bell was then

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* *For men.*

Peiki	-	Thursday, Saturday, Sunday.
Todi	-	Sunday, Tuesday.
Kuttan	-	Saturday, Sunday.
Kenna	-	Tuesday, Saturday, Sunday.
Pekkan	-	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday.
For women.		
All clans	-	Thursday and Saturday.

† Each clan has several *Methgúdis*, separate ones for men and for women. In this case, however, as the deceased was a poor man who had died while on a visit to relatives at a distance, his body was not carried back to the usual burning ground of his Mand.

‡ When death is imminent the patient is dressed in a new *Pútkuli* and other cloths.

§ The circle is called *Tood* (*Kraal*), and is made in imitation of a buffalo kraal. If there is a kraal near the *Methgúdi*, the body is taken there, and the stone circle is not made. It is never made for a woman.

‖ Compare 2 *Sam.* xv. 30; *Esther* vi. 12; and *Jer.* xiv. 3, 4.

¶ The wood of the *Eugenia Arnottiana* is always used at the green funeral, that of the *Olea robusta* at the dry.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

764 was an elderly relative of the dead woman, who, while watching the ceremonial, was placidly engaged in the manufacture of a holly walking-stick with the aid of a glass scraper. The proceedings were watched on behalf [648] of Government by a forest guard, and a police constable who, with marked affectation, held his handkerchief to his nose throughout the ceremonial. The corpse was decorated with brass rings, and within the putkūli were stowed jaggery, a scroll of paper adorned with cowry shells, snuff and tobacco, cocoanuts, biscuits, various kinds of grain, ghī, honey, and a tin-framed looking-glass. A long purse, containing a silver Japanese yen and an Arcot rupee of the East India Company, was tied up in the putkūli close to the feet. These preliminaries concluded, the corpse was hoisted up, and swung three times over the now burning pyre, above which a mimic bier, made of slender twigs, was held. The body was then stripped of its jewelry, and a lock of hair cut off by the daughter- [765] in-law for preservation, together with a fragment of the skull. I was told that, when the corpse is swung over [795] the pyre, the dead person goes to amnodr (the world of the dead). In this connection, Dr. Rivers writes that "it would seem as if this ceremony of swinging the body over the fire was directly connected with the removal of the objects of value. The swinging over the fire would be symbolic of its destruction by fire; and this symbolic burning has the great advantage that the objects of value are not consumed, and are available for use another time. This is probably the real explanation of the ceremony, but it is not the explanation given by the Todas themselves. They say that long ago, about 400 years, a man [193] supposed to be dead was put on the funeral pyre, and, [763] revived by the heat, he was found to be alive, and was able to walk away from the funeral place. In consequence

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
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of this, the rule was made that the body should always be swung three times over the fire before it is finally placed thereon." [Colonel Marshall narrates the story that a Toda who had revived from what was thought his death-bed, has been observed parading about, very proud and distinguished looking, wearing the finery with which he had been bedecked for his own funeral, and which he would be permitted to carry till he really departed this life.] As soon as the pyre was fairly ablaze, the mourners, with the exception of some of the female relatives, left the shōla, and the men, congregating on the summit of a neighbouring hill, invoked their god. Four men, seized, apparently in imitation of the Kota Dēvādi, with divine frenzy, began to shiver and gesticulate wildly, while running blindly to and fro with closed eyes and shaking fists. They then began to talk in Malayālam, and offer an explanation of an extraordinary phenomenon, which had appeared in the form of a gigantic figure, which disappeared as suddenly as it appeared. At the annual ceremony of walking through fire (hot ashes) in that year, two factions arose owing to some dissension, and two sets of ashes were used. This seems to have annoyed the gods, and those concerned were threatened with speedy ruin. But the whole story was very vague. The possession by some Todas of a smattering of Malayālam is explained by the fact that, when grazing their buffaloes on the northern and western slopes of the Nīlgiris, they come in contact with Malayālam-speaking people from the neighbouring Malabar district.

At the funeral of a man (a leper), the corpse was placed in front of the entrance to a circle of loose stones about a yard and a half in diameter, which had been specially constructed for the occasion. Just before the buffalo sacrifice, a man of the Paiki clan standing near

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

[Melgarsh Village]

still complaining that she had insufficient milk for both, I went to the bazaar and bought he a tin of Glaxo and a bottle of Gripe-ease. On the 30th May, there was a definite change. The boy started looking better, while the girl's health began to decline. Motsod had been to my bungalow early in the morning to ask me to come, as the little girl twin, he said, was unwell. She certainly looked listless and weak, and I wondered how this could have come about so quickly. I suspected that she was not being fed properly, and I imagined it was because the Todas had, all the same, decided to let her die, in accordance with their ancient custom of female infanticide, and of doing away with one of a pair of twins.

I went to the local government hospital, and requested the assistance of the Indian practitioner in charge, but he refused to come along, giving as an excuse that he could not possibly create a precedent by attending aboriginals at their homes. I tried to persuade Erzigwuf to travel to the hospital in my car, but she refused, saying that she was not well enough, and that the baby, besides, was too sick to stand the trip. Karnos put a word in too, stating that Western medicine was no good in a case like this, and that it was better for the child to remain at the *mad*. There was much wailing and crying over the bad health of the child, however, and to anybody unacquainted with Toda customs, this behaviour would have appeared perfectly genuine.

On the morning of the 31st, Munbokwutn turned up at my bungalow at 7.30 a.m. with the news that the child had died. I went immediately to Melgarsh and found them all assembled in the front room of the *Warthutthiarsh* (where all clan members must be brought, even from outlying *mads*, to die), wailing and lamenting loudly over the death of the baby. Toda visitors started arriving to take part in the mourning, and one of the first to crawl into the house on hands and knees, howling and sobbing ritually, was Erzigwuf's father, Tinmarsh of Pan *modol*. It all appeared perfectly real, and one nearly felt sorry for Mutnarsh, who was sitting outside the *arsh*, crying his eyes out, while Sodup, either from fright or in imitation, joined him heartily. Sodam, nearby, was quite indifferent as was also Munbokwutn, the youngest father. Only later, some four months afterwards did the Todas admit to my wife that they had let the little girl die, so that really all this exhibition of grief was purely conventional and, if not completely hypocritical, at least due to feelings of guilt or to the depressing effect which inexorable customs may have on people of this kind.

The funeral took place on June 1st, and as is the Toda custom, the little girl's dead body was first ceremoniously "wedded" to her *maichuni*,